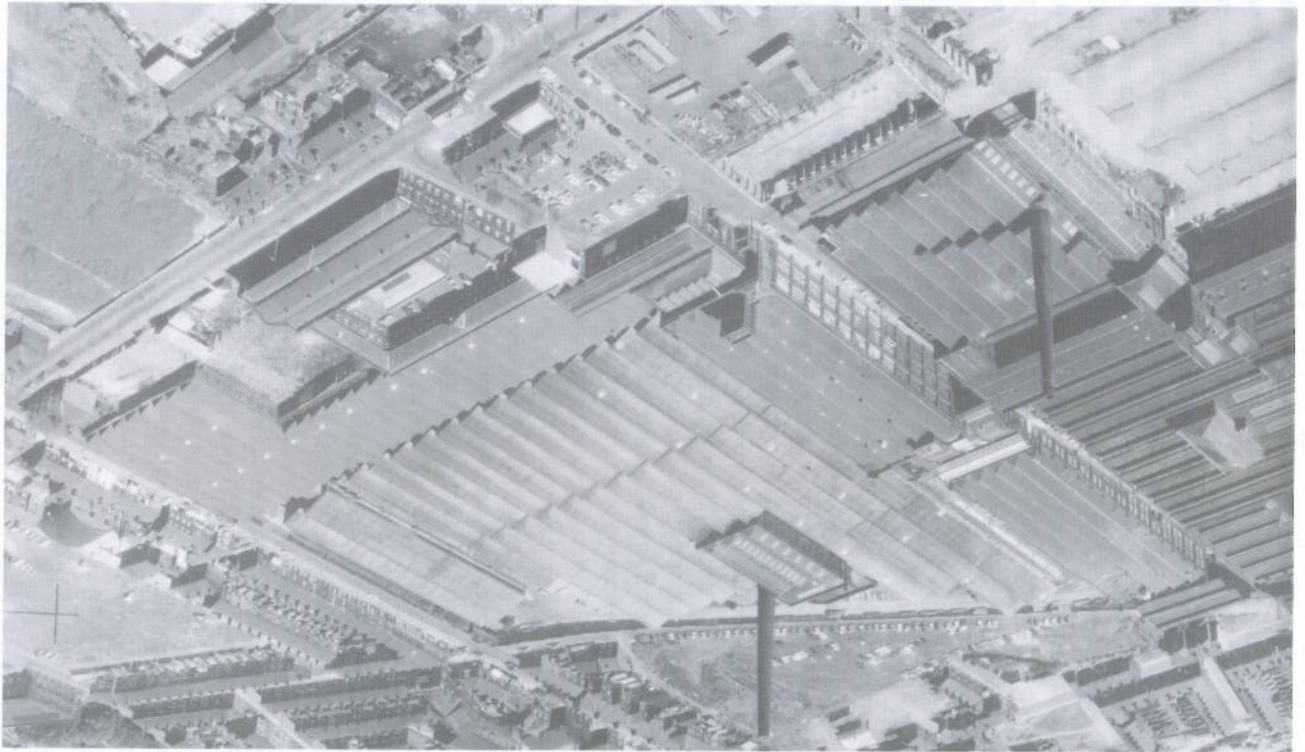




New section of Hartford Works, opened 1957 (upper centre) engulfing the original saw mills building. In the lower l.h. corner can be seen the sites of some demolished 1844 buildings

'old offices' which necessitated the part of the former stable block (the last horse had only recently been put out to grass), not already in use as garages and workshops for the, now, motor transport vehicles, be converted into a suite of offices for Platt Brothers & Company Limited. The TMM Offices and the Platt Brothers & Company (Holdings) Limited Offices were in the 'New Offices' block, popularly identified, with light hearted reverence, as being 'under the clock'.

The new building at Helmsshore had been opened in the previous year to give an extra working space of 100 000 square feet. Predominantly, this was used to house the lines of product machines on which the processing research and customer stock testing was carried out – complete with a new testing laboratory – and the Technical Information and Patent libraries. The original building was then given over to basic research on fibre manipulation and the design and evaluation of prototype models of newly developed product machines. Also, an enlarged workshop, with a versatile complement of machine tools, to manufacture experimental parts. The new building programme at the Howard & Bullough and Dobson & Barlow works proceeded to completion by the end of the decade. The programme at Howard & Bullough was the larger, costing in the order of £600 000. Compared with the original works of the other Operating Companies, Dobson & Barlow's works, at Bradley Fold (between Bolton and Radcliffe), was a modern single storeyed complex of buildings into which that company had, from 1906, gradually moved its operations from its previous main works, on Kay Street, in the heart of Bolton. The new building programme at Bradley Fold, consisted of a new office block and an extension to the product machines fitting shops. There were now just the four TMM Operating Companies: Platt Brothers & Company Limited, Dobson & Barlow Limited, Howard & Bullough Limited and Joseph Hibbert & Company Limited, all equipped with efficient factories.

The slackening in the volume of orders received by the Platt Brothers & Company (Holdings) Limited group of companies was not due entirely to the slackening demand for textile machinery from the world market place. Whilst it was true, in the early nineteen-fifties, the level of demand from the world market place had reduced, from that which had obtained in the immediate post war years, some of the reduction in orders experienced by the group companies stemmed from the fact that their product machines had become technically less competitive. The demands of the post war boom had been fulfilled with the pre-war models, but the competition, particularly from the Continent, where often a fresh start had had to be made, was beginning to offer machines of a superior design and specification. Consequently a whole-hearted development programme was set in motion throughout the group, the